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TELEGRAM

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FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON
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DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY Joan Iguchi DATE 10/5/81
RDS ☐ or XDS ☐ EXT. DATE
TS AUTH. REASON(S)
ENDORSE EXISTING MARKINGS ☐
DECLASSIFIED ☑ RELEASABLE ☑
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S E C R E T SAIGON 2282

EXDIS

1. IN A RELAXED AND FRANK CONVERSATION WITH PRIME MINISTER KY AUGUST 2 I WENT OVER A NUMBER OF MATTERS RELATED TO ELECTIONS AND HIS HANDLING OF THE PRESS.

2. SINCE WE HAD HEARD FROM SOME OF THE OTHER CANDIDATES THAT TRANSPORTATION ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE CANDIDATES' TRIPS TO THE PROVINCES WERE NOT BEING WORKED OUT BY THE GVN, I RAISED THE GENERAL QUESTION OF CAMPAIGN PREPARATIONS WITH KY. HE SAID THAT THESE PREPARATIONS WERE

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GOING FAIRLY WELL. I REITERATED MY EARLIER OFFER TO ASSIST WITH SUBSTITUE PLANES FOR THOSE NEEDED FOR THE CAMPAIGN TRIPS IF THIS WOULD BE OF HELP. HE SAID HE APPRECIATED OUR WILLINGNESS TO HELP AND WOULD LET US KNOW IF THIS WAS NEEDED. HE SAID THEY WERE TRYING TO WORK OUT THESE ARRANGEMENTS BUT ADDED THAT SOME OF THE CANDIDATES DIDN'T SEEM TO WANT TO FLY ON GVN PLANES, SINCE THEY WERE NOT SURE OF THE PLANES' SECURITY. HE ADDED T WAT HE UNDERSTOOD HUONG AND SUU WOULD PROBABLY NOT GO ON THE FIELD TRIPS, FOR REASONS OF HEALTH, AND WOULD SEND REPRESENTATIVES. KY THEREFORE THOUGHT HE AND THIEU WOULD NOT HAVE TO GO ON ALL OF THE TRIPS.

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3. KY THEN REFERRED TO HIS RECENT REMARKS BEFORE THE LAMBRETTA DRIVERS WHEN HE HAD SAID THAT GOOD ELECTIONS WERE NEEDED WHICH WOULD BRING IN A STRONG LEGAL REGIME CAPABLE OF BRINGING ABOUT A SOCIAL REVOLUTION. HE SAID THAT THE PEOPLE WOULD NOT SUPPORT A REGIME WHICH WAS CORRUPT OR BASED ON FRAUDULENT ELECTIONS, NOR WOULD HE. HE CLAIMED THAT THESE COMMENTS HAD BEEN MISQUOTED

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AND THAT HE HAD NOT MADE ANY STATEMENT ABOUT MOUNTING A COUP AS HE HAD BEEN QUOTED. I TOOK THE OCCASION TO POINT OUT THE DIFFICULTIES THAT THESE STATEMENTS OR MISQUOTATIONS MADE NOT ONLY FOR HIM BUT ALSO FOR US. I NOTED SPECIFICALLY THE QUESTIONS POSED TO SECRETARY RUSK ON "FACE THE NATION" WHICP STEMMED DIRECTLY FROM THESE REPORTED COMMENTS. I SAID AGAIN THAT I HAD MADE CLEAR TO HIM AND BUI DIEM THAT WE COULD NOT CONTEMPLATE ANY COUPS. I ALSO NOTED THE PRESS REPORTS TO THE EFFECT THAT AN ARMED FORCES COUNCIL WOULD IN FACT RUN THE GOVERNMENT FROM BEHIND THE SCENES NO MATTER WHAT THE RESULTS OF THE ELECTIONS. I ADDED THAT WE UNDERSTOOD THE NEED FOR AN ARMED FORCES COUNCIL AND IT WAS IN FACT PROVIDED FOR IN THE CONSTITUTION, BUT THE IMPRESSION HAD BEEN GIVEN THAT IT WOULD BE THE REAL CABINET. KY SAID THAT IT WAS NOT THIEIR INTENTION TO ESTABLISH ANY INNER GROUP WHICH WOULD RUN THE GOVERNMENT. HE RESTATED HIS OBJECTIVE OF A BROADLY BASED GOVERNMENT REPRESENTING BOTH CIVILIAN AND MILITARY ELEMENTS.

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4. I SAID THAT I WANTED TO GIVE HIM SOME FRANK ADVICE ON THE MATTER OF PRESS RELATIONS. I THOUGHT THAT IF HE SET UP AN ARRANGEMENT WHEREBY CORRESPONDENTS WHO ACCOMPANY HIM ON TRIPS OR TO CEREMONIES WOULD CLEAR THEIR ACTUAL QUOTATIONS FROM HIM, THIS WOULD GIVE HIM

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EFFECTIVE CONTROL OVER THE SITUATION. I POINTED OUT THAT THIS WAS A COMMON PRACTICE AND ONE WHICH I KNEW GENERAL WESTMORELAND USED SUCCESSFULLY. KY SAID HE THOUGHT THIS WAS A GOOD IDEA AND THAT HE WOULD WORK THIS OUT.

5. IN DISCUSSING HIS INTENTIONS WITH RESPECT TO GOVERNMENT PLANS, KY TOUCHED ON THE MEETING WITH CLIFFORD AND TAYLOR AND SAID THAT THE EXCHANGE OF VIEWS WITH THEM HAD BEEN VERY USEFUL TO HIM AND TO THE OTHER GVN LEADERS. HE SAID THAT WHEN THEIR OWN VIEWS WERE MORE CRYSTALLIZED, HE WANTED TO TALK MORE FULLY AND FREQUENTLY WITH ME AND GENERAL WETMORELAND ON ALL THESE MATTERS, ESPECAILLY ARVN REORGANIZATION AND PACIFICATION. HE ADDED SOMEWHAT

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AS AN AFTERTHOUGHT THAT PEOPLE SOMETIMES ASKED HIM WHETHER HE WAS NOT UNDER PRESURE FROM THE U.S. BUT HE HAD REPLIED THAT HE ALWAYS TALKED MATTERS OF MUTUAL INTEREST OUT THOROUGHLY WITH ME AND GENERAL WESTMORELAND. HE FOUND THESE TALKS EXTREMELY VALUABLE TO HIM AND IT WAS ALWAYS UNDERSTOOD THAT WE WOULD AGREE ON CERTAIN MATTERS BUT NOT NECESSARILY ON ALL OF THEM.

6. KY REVERTED TO MY EARLIER SUGGESTION ABOUT FINDING SOME GOOD CHIEU HOI RALLIERS WHO MIGHT BE CANDIDATES FOR THE LOWER HOUSE ELECTIONS. HE SAID THAT HE HAD TALKED WITH GENERAL CAO VAN VIEN AND GENERAL THIEU ABOUT THIS THEY HAD AGREED. HE THOUGHT THEY WOULD ENCOURAGE THE LT. COLONEL WHO HAD RECENTLY DEFECTED TO RUN AND BELIEVED THEY COULD FIND SEVERAL MORE QUALIFIED ONES.

GP-3. BUNKER

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A-91 — CONFIDENTIAL — HANDLING INDICATOR

RECEIVED
DEPARTMENT OF STATE
Aug 10 8 25 AM 1967
ARMY-STATE BRANCH

TO : Department of State

INFO : BANGKOK, CINCPAC FOR POLAD, VIENTIANE

FROM : American Embassy SAIGON DATE: August 3, 1967

SUBJECT : Nguyen Hoa Hiep Meeting with Ambassador

REF :

Action Assigned to YN
Action Taken
Date of Action
Saigon Office Symbol

Presidential candidate Nguyen Hoa Hiep, accompanied by his running-mate Nguyen The Truyen and "political adviser" Ngo Ngoc Nham, paid a brief courtesy call on Ambassador Bunker, Deputy Ambassador Locke and Political Counselor Calhoun on July 31.

Hiep and Nham emphasized that the Hiep-Truyen ticket was freely chosen by VNQDD representatives throughout the country, the first time in the long history of the VNQDD that an official party candidate has been selected. (Nham claimed that the slate will enjoy the support of 50,000 party members in the Saigon area alone.) Hiep expressed the hope that the September elections would be free and fair. Ambassador Bunker assured him that the United States shares that hope. The United States government supports no candidate and opposes none. Our only desire is for a free and fair election. Ambassador Bunker also stressed that after a fair election, all the defeated candidates, and all elements of Vietnamese society, should give full support to the newly elected President. Hiep agreed, saying that national unity is important, and adding that he knows and respects most of the other candidates.

When asked whether people in the countryside are aware of the coming elections, Hiep replied categorically that they are. He said that even members of the NLF are extremely interested in the elections. Hiep predicted that if the elections are honest, "the two-thirds of the NLF who are not really Communists will return to the nationalist ranks." Ambassador Bunker replied that we also hope that the elections will encourage members of the Viet Cong to return, and restated the United States government's desire for free and fair elections.

GROUP 3
Downgraded at 12-year intervals,
not automatically declassified.

FORM DS-323 4-62 — CONFIDENTIAL — FOR DEPT. USE ONLY ☑ In ☐ Out

Drafted by: POL:DLambertson:lc(8/3/67)
Contents and Classification Approved by: POL:JACalhoun
Clearances: POL:TJCHeavner POL:TMRecknagel

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Ambassador Bunker asked Hiep if any Upper House lists are associated with his candidacy. Hiep said that his slate and the Upper House list of Foreign Minister Tran Van Do will assist each other. Hiep noted that he, Tran Van Tuyen and Nguyen Van Thanh (both members of Do's list) are long-time collaborators.

Upon leaving, Hiep gave Ambassador Bunker a folder containing his platform, campaign plan and campaign speeches. (The Hiep-Truyen platform is attached as an enclosure to this airgram.)

As he was departing, political adviser Nham said "if Mr. Hiep is elected, we hope it will be in part because of American support." He was reminded of Ambassador Bunker's statement emphasizing that we support no candidate.

Comment:

(a) Despite the effort to make it clear that the US supports no candidate, Hiep may try to claim US backing.

(b) In his campaign plan (classified "secret") Hiep calculates that his ticket could get 1,470,000 votes. We consider both that estimate, and Nham's claim of 50,000 active supporters in the Saigon area to be ~~exaggerated~~ greatly exaggerated.

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Enclosure: att 8
Hiep-Truyen Platform

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NGUYEN HOA HIEP - NGUYEN THE TRUYEN CAMPAIGN PLATFORM

QUOTE:

PROGRAM

TEN POINTS

CONSTITUTIONALISM: 1. Protect and faithfully carry out the Constitution.

PEACE: 2. Establish a disciplined peaceful revolution, founded on national unity, independence, freedom, unification and social justice.

ADMINISTRATION: 4. Respect the customs and practices of minority compatriots, give special assistance to help ethnic minorities develop their life and culture.

SOLDIERS: 5. Give practical assistance to improve the lives of soldiers and their families, establish a plan of effective assistance in the fields of education and employment for discharged soldiers, protect the livelihood of widows, orphans and disabled veterans.

ECONOMIC: 6. Systematize the national economy, with three goals:

(a) Assist agriculture and fishing from the standpoint of equipment and credit.
(b) Develop light industry, especially those industries connected with farming and fishing.
(c) Establish a heavy industrial sector.

SOCIAL: 7. Establish a social security system to help families with many children, the old and the sick.

8. Solve the housing shortage, the problem of house rental and land rental, and the problem of public utilities: electricity, water and transportation.

CULTURE: 9. Give priority to culture and education. Completely reform present educational plans and programs to make them more appropriate for the needs of youth in today's society, especially with regard to:

a) Basic popular education;
b) Specialized education;
c) Adult education.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS: 10. Apply for admission to the United Nations.

Associate economically and culturally with free nations.

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